



Mississippian Ernie Myers sits with friend James Fancher, pastor of Monticello Church. (Tim Nicholas photo)

Mississippian Myers voted 2nd vice president

By Tim Nicholas

A Mississippi native son was elected second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas. Ernie Myers, a native of Ruleville, Miss., was elected in a runoff against Lewis Adkinson of Colorado Springs, Colo., 3,540 to 2,748. A total of 19,007 had voted in the election for president.

Myers is executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention where he has served since 1978.

Concerning Southern Baptists' coming to Las Vegas, Myers said the Nevadans will have "a much better understanding of who we are. Of course, we get the joy of seeing almost 1,000 people saved." Nevadans, he said, "are probably not going to be afraid of us any more. So, out of it (the SBC) our work has been set ahead by many years and we'll be able to be more effective in our outreach as a result."

"This just may be the thing that's going to pull the plug to see continued revival in Nebraska," he said.

Myers said that though he had hoped for more persons to participate in the witnessing campaign — about 2,500 did so — "we were grateful for those that came." He said that the

results include 25 new congregations that have begun or are in the process of beginning. "We've got names and addresses and spiritual condition. We'll reach them if our churches will follow through."

Myers said that he is not in the political race. "I am a conservative, but not politically motivated," he said. "I feel like I'm as conservative as anybody in the Southern Baptist Convention. I will serve to the best of my ability all Southern Baptists. It is an honor."

Myers was born in 1925 "the year the Cooperative Program was born" he said. He grew up in the delta, graduated from Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He served First Church, Byram, as pastor while in college. He later was pastor of First Church, Gautier, leaving Mississippi in 1952 to do graduate work at Vanderbilt where he was pastor there.

He went to Arizona as Sunday School director for state Baptists in 1956 going to the Sunday School Board in 1961 where he was church architectural consultant. He held a similar position in Arizona, 1975-78.



Gerald Harris responds

Gerald Harris, pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, gives the traditional response to the convention welcoming speech while Parliamentarian Barry McCarty and President Jerry Vines stand at right. The mayor of Las Vegas, though, did not show up to welcome the SBC. Ernie Myers, executive director of Nevada Baptists, said the mayor would not have done such on purpose. Harris spoke of Las Vegas as "an alluring city with big names and big names, its baccarat and blackjack, its limousines and luminaries, its brilliant lights and professional fights and its busy nights." He said that Baptists "are somewhat attracted by the glitter and the glamor of this city, but as children of the heavenly father, we are just pilgrims and strangers in this world." He spoke of "a city eternal" to which Christians will go. "We are interested in taking as many people to that celestial city as we possibly can." (Tim Nicholas photo)

The Second Front Page

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SBC dabbles in evangelism, politics in Las Vegas meet

By Tim Nicholas

LAS VEGAS — The tone of this year's Southern Baptist Convention here was more evangelistic in nature than in recent years. However, the undercurrent of politics cut through a number of convention actions.

A witnessing effort that drew about 2,500 participants prior to and during the convention last week led to nearly 1,000 professions of faith in Jesus Christ, according to Nevada executive director Ernie Myers, and up to 25 new congregations being started. Most of the witnessing effort took place in residential areas, rather than the tourist Strip area of Las Vegas.

However, evangelists, meeting on Wednesday afternoon, held a processional down the gaming strip led by Arthur Blessitt carrying a large cross and attracting attention from passers-by.

A cab driver told the Baptist Record that Baptists "have been trying to get me saved all week." He lifted from the front seat one of the several Bibles he said he'd been given. "They're nice about it, though," he said, explaining that he was accustomed to being witnessed to: "My wife's been trying to for 20 years . . . now she's got the grandchildren on it."

Politics remained in the presidential election as it has been for the past decade and the Baptist Joint Committee squeaked by for one more year of existence after a motion to reconsider the budget failed narrowly.

Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Church, Jacksonville, was re-elected to a second one year term as president of the SBC, defeating challenger Daniel Vestal by 2,506 votes. Vestal, pastor of Dunwoody Church at Atlanta, drew 8,248 votes to Vines' 10,754.

Vines was nominated by Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Church, Del City, Okla., and newly-elected president of the SBC Pastors' Conference which has been closely aligned with the conservative takeover of the SBC. Vestal was nominated by David Sapp, pastor of First Church, Chamblee, Ga. Vestal has been seen as the candidate of the "centrist" group which was formed to attempt to stop the conservative takeover of the SBC.

Both candidates were endorsed by partisan newspapers: Vines by the Southern Baptist Advocate; Vestal by SBC Today.

First vice president is Junior Hill, an evangelist from Hartselle, Ala. he defeated other nominees: Bill Poe, a layman from Charlotte, N.C.; Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of WMU, SBC; and Brian Harbour, pastor of Immanuel Church, Little Rock. Hill, nominated by C.B. Hogue, executive director of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, received 6,989 votes, or 54.2 percent of the vote.

Second vice president is Ernie

Myers, executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention, and a native of Ruleville, Miss. He defeated Lewis Adkinson of Colorado and Gene Bowman of Georgia in two ballots, the runoff being against Adkinson.

There were 19,002 votes cast for president, 12,884 for first vice president, 6,920 for the first ballot for second vice president, and 6,288 for the runoff.

Voting — and attendance — fell off so sharply after the presidential election that a ballot was taken Thursday morning to determine if there was a quorum (25 percent of registered messengers) for the purpose of doing business. With 20,407 messengers registered, the quorum was reached by a handful of votes. And a motion by Gerald Harris, pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, to accept without discussion the last seven resolutions present by the resolutions committee barely failed and with a total vote of only 5,283.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington-based religious liberties watchdog, which has Southern Baptist participation along with that of eight other Baptist bodies, narrowly avoided defunding as it has in the past several conventions.

The organization has been criticized

because it has campaigned against government sponsored public school prayers and against tuition tax credits and because members of the Public Affairs Committee, who are SBC representatives on the Joint Committee board, do not have direct control of employees.

Kenneth Barnett of Denver, Colorado, and a member of the Executive Committee, made a motion on Wednesday to reconsider the 1989-90 Cooperative Program budget of \$137.2 million. The budget had sailed through on Tuesday without any discussion or question. Barnett moved to reconsider the budget with an eye to amend it to take \$200,000 from the budget allocation of the Baptist Joint Committee, which was slated to receive \$391,796. Barnett would have given that \$200,000 in the following amounts: to the Foreign Mission Board, \$60,000; to the Home Mission Board and Public Affairs Committee, \$50,000 each; and to the Christian Life Commission, \$40,000.

Former SBC President Adrian Rogers of Memphis spoke in favor of the motion to reconsider. "We have marched around this issue so many times," he said, "the body now needs to speak." And former Executive

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SBC officers

Messengers to the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 13-15 in Las Vegas, Nev., re-elected Jerry Vines, (center) pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., to a second one-year term as president. The convention's vice presidents are Junior Hill, (right) evangelist from Hartselle, Ala., first vice president, and Ernest Myers, executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention in Reno, second vice president. (Photo by Stanley Leary)

"Forget it," says Moyers to Executive Committee

By Dan Martin and Jim Newton

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — With a three-word notice, the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention Monday dismissed the possibility of a discussion between television commentator Bill Moyers and committee member Paul Pressler.

In February the Executive Committee adopted by a 40-14 vote a resolution critical of Moyers' three-part documentary, "God and Politics," particularly a segment on Southern Baptists. Moyers immediately requested an appearance before the Executive Committee in June with Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge, to discuss the matter.

However, before the committee could consider the request, Moyers requested it be withdrawn.

The notice on the recommendations to be voted on by the Executive Committee at its meeting prior to the SBC annual meeting simply reported: "Deleted. Request withdrawn."

Executive Committee Chairman Charles Sullivan, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lenoir City, Tenn., had said he would deny Moyers an appearance before the June 12 meeting because of the press of time at the two-hour gathering.

"I did not feel I had the right (to decide whether Moyers would appear) but that I would present it to the Executive Committee because they have the right to say whether they would hear him," Sullivan told Baptist Press.

Sullivan earlier told Baptist Press he would present the matter to the committee and let members decide in June whether they wanted to hear a discussion of the matter at the September, 1989 meeting.

However, on Sunday night (June 11) Moyers sent a fax message to Sullivan in Las Vegas, Nev., site of the 1989 SBC annual meeting, withdrawing the request.

In the Executive Committee deliberations, Sullivan declined to read the text of Moyers' message, saying only the request had been withdrawn and adding, "it served no useful purpose" to read the text.

Moyers made a copy of the message to Sullivan available to Baptist Press, the news service of the SBC. It said:

"I have read in the Baptist Press that you intend on Monday to ask the Executive Committee to vote whether or not to allow me to appear at your meeting in September to answer Paul Pressler's attack on my documentary, 'Forget it.'"

"When you and Pressler would not allow me to present my case this week at your meeting in Las Vegas and when Pressler refused my offer of free time on PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) to discuss the issue following the repeat in May of the documentary, I realized that I am up against a situation most un-Baptist: closed minds, and in the parlance of your host city, a stacked deck."

"There is no way to get a fair hearing from an Executive Committee that has become a rubber stamp for a secular politician who has infected this Christian fellowship with the partisan tactics of malice, manipulation and untruth. Under his thumb, you do only his will."

"I want no part of it."

Although the matter drew discussion during a meeting of the Ex-

ecutive Committee's administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee Monday morning, it drew no discussion when Sullivan announced the deletion of the matter from the agenda.

However, after the regular agenda was dispensed with, committee member James Wideman, pastor of Screven Memorial Baptist Church in Portsmouth, N.H., introduced a motion that said:

"I move that the Executive Committee report to Baptist Press that Bill Moyers has withdrawn his request to appear before the Executive Committee and the Executive Committee has acknowledged that request."

The motion was adopted without discussion or opposition.

Wideman's motion was different from a motion adopted earlier in the day by the administrative subcommittee, which had voted to "respectfully request that Baptist Press only report that Moyers had withdrawn his request to appear."

Wideman explained after the full executive committee meeting that when he thought about the motion he made in subcommittee, he realized it amounted to instructing Baptist Press what and what not to report.

"I changed my motion because I have confidence that Baptist Press will do nothing to inflame the issue," Wideman said.

During the subcommittee meeting — which was conducted under

background rules that allow no direct quotation or attribution — several members said they believe the whole issue is a personal matter between Pressler and Moyers and that nothing can be gained by continuing the controversy.

"Let's just let it drop and leave it alone," one subcommittee member said later.

Another said he believed it was an error to adopt the February resolution criticizing Moyers and the continuing controversy just proves the point.

Another said the matter was not just a personal matter between Pressler and Moyers. "Moyers has accused the SBC Executive Committee of being puppets of Paul Pressler, and we need to respond," he said.

Pressler was informed of the Moyers letter Sunday and called it "ridiculous." He said he did not want to see the text reported in Baptist Press.

When asked for comment, Pressler said: "I have nothing to say about it. It has been deleted, and it was reported as being deleted" from the agenda.

Baptist Press Director Alvin C. Shackelford said he wants to make sure any report in the news service is balanced and fair and tells both Moyers' reasons for withdrawing his request and offers the Executive Committee and Pressler an opportunity to respond.

SBC dabbles in evangelism, politics

(Continued from page 3)

Committee member Frank Ingraham of Franklin, Tenn., said that to change the budget "would be to favor those who are the most winsome at the moment and not those programs the convention has set as priorities."

The vote to reconsider the budget lost 5,198 to 6,034, or 54 to 46 percent.

The Executive Committee, just prior to the convention, voted to delay recommending establishment of a new agency in Washington which would basically supplant the Baptist Joint Committee. The Religious Liberty Commission recommendation was delayed after President Vines asked for a deferment so the Vegas convention could concentrate on the evangelistic efforts.

The Executive Committee deferred making the recommendation they said, "for a peaceful Convention meeting and a positive witness in Las Vegas" until next year's convention in New Orleans. It did not comment on the relative value of peace and witnessing in New Orleans.

Most motions and resolutions presented at the convention never saw the light of day. Most motions were referred to various agencies or ruled out of order. One messenger, whose motion was referred to the Executive Committee, wanted it considered separately. He would have asked messengers to reschedule the president's address to some time other than just before the vote for conven-

tion president. Pat Pearce of Hickory, N.C., lost in his bid for separate consideration on a ballot vote of 5,247 to 5,206.

A motion concerning a Mississippi was delayed for a year. Joe Arthur of Fort Worth asked the convention to immediately remove Curtis Caine of Jackson from the board of the SBC Christian Life Commission. Caine, a member of First Church, Jackson, has been criticized for comments he made last year in which he called Martin Luther King Jr. a "fraud," and said that apartheid does not exist anymore in South Africa, and "was beneficial when it did."

The year delay was to consider legal ramifications and to allow Caine a chance to respond.

Other motions which were referred were to adopt no resolutions during the convention in Las Vegas, and to receive and respond to a "memorial." The memorial came from the Baptist General Association of Virginia which spoke of "the present crisis in Southern Baptist life" and called for a new look at relationships between state conventions and the SBC "in which no faction — right or left — can be arbitrary and exclusionary." The Executive Committee had already appointed a liaison committee to respond to the memorial.

A motion asking to rescind a resolution on the priesthood of the believer adopted by the 1988 convention was ruled out of order as was an appeal to

ask messengers to refrain from "frivolous applause" during the convention to express personal opinion. That motion did receive applause.

A total of 51 resolutions were presented by messengers but only 10 were considered and adopted.

Kiely Young, pastor of First Church, Greenville, presented a resolution that was not reported out of committee. It resolved to "encourage all SBC churches to give at least 10 percent of all undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program, and further resolved: all elected or appointed SBC officers set the example by encouraging their churches to give at least 10 percent of all undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program and establish a goal to increase this percentage on an annual basis."

A resolution by Mark Frees of Sledge not reported out encouraged support for the work of the organization known as Christian Leaders for Responsible Television.

Several of the resolutions adopted drew debate, but only one did not end up as the resolutions committee wished.

In a resolution designating 1990 as "International Year of Bible Reading," the committee presented it as saying that "whereas, Baptists believe that the Bible is the inspired written record of God's revelation to men..." During discussion of the resolution, the committee wanted to change that to "Whereas, Baptists

believe that the Bible is the inspired written revelation of God to men..."

Messengers denied that change, one citing the original wording as more like that of the Baptist Faith and Message statement which is the general statement of Baptists concerning what they believe the Bible to be saying.

Another change, proposed by a messenger, would have changed the word "men" to "humanity." Resolutions Chairman Mark Coppenger quipped that "men" was in the Baptist Faith and Message. That change failed.

A resolution on abortion drew discussion, particularly over the phrase calling for legislation and/or a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortions "except to prevent the imminent death of the mother." Some thought that too narrow. The resolution passed as written.

Other resolutions opposed racism, drunk driving, and drugs and violence. Others supported Christians in China and personal integrity.

When the convention meets in New Orleans next June, Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hills Church, Mobile, and new recording secretary of the Executive Committee, will deliver the convention sermon; Jimmy Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Church, Huntsville, Ala., and former Executive Committee member, will be alternate. John McKay, a music evangelist from Hurst, Tex., will direct the music.



Sharing faith

Bernie Creel of Tennessee (right) and Charles Phillips of North Carolina share their Christian faith with Mrs. Richard Green and her son June 10 during Southern Baptists' massive door-to-door Christian witnessing effort in Las Vegas, Nev. The evangelism thrust preceded the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. (Photo by Stanley Leary)

WMU Wrapup

Weatherford bids farewell; Mississippian renamed secretary

By Orville Scott and Joe Westbury

LAS VEGAS — Members of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union rallied around the theme "In His Name" for their two-day annual meeting as they considered ways to be more effective for missions at home and abroad.

Crowds as high as 1,600 were present in the rotunda of the Las Vegas Convention Center as members of the woman's auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention heard testimonies from missionaries, listened to updates on the denomination's special mission offerings, and learned of countries which remain closed to the gospel message.

In her outgoing comments, retiring executive director Carolyn Weatherford of Birmingham, Ala., said she deplored the 10-year-old controversy which has polarized the denomination and consumed two thirds of her tenure at the helm of the nation's largest woman's missions organization.

Weatherford drew applause when she said, "It is imperative that, instead of continuing to draw swords and choose sides, we acknowledge that nothing divides us is as important as that which binds us in Christ's mandate to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all the people."

Other obstacles on the horizon for the organization include a weakening of missions emphasis in the convention, a declining percentage of churches with WMU units, and a resulting leveling out of national membership.

As part of the final address to the group at the annual denominational gathering, Weatherford observed that SBC leadership "continues to come from churches where the Cooperative Program is less than five percent of the total budget rather than from churches where cooperative missions is emphasized by Cooperative Program gifts in the 20-30 percent category."

Weatherford said she feared the combination of problems in showing up in a lack of commitment to the denomination's missions program and will cause a further eroding in funding of those programs.

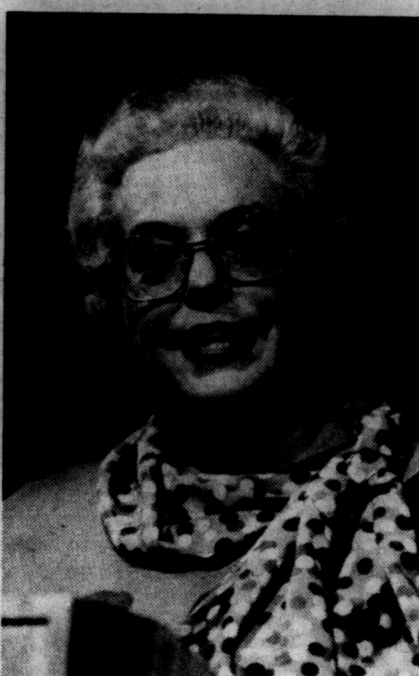
In recognition of her 15 years service to the organization, Weatherford was honored for consistently challenging WMU members and Southern Baptists to remain true to missions. The framed citation was presented by Foreign Mission Board President Keith Parks of Richmond, Va., and Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis of Atlanta.

WMU members heard Parks report that giving to this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering jumped almost 13 percent from last year to \$78,776,000. The total is the largest percentage increase since 1982.

Lewis said it was too early to project the giving level of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, but preliminary receipts indicate a similar gain for the offering.

Though both offerings may show an increase this year, Weatherford said that neither offerings have met their goal since 1981. In addition, both agencies are struggling under massive budget cuts that threaten the future of Southern Baptist foreign and home missions efforts, she said.

For the first time, black banners



were used in the annual processional of flags to dramatize the number of nations that are closed to missionaries.

WMU members heard ways the Foreign Mission Board is attempting

to plant the gospel in those countries by use of non-resident missionaries.

John and Avah Shelby, serving through Cooperative Services International (CSI) in Hong Kong, gave testimonies of how they shared the gospel in such nations. CSI is sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board.

Dressed in traditional Mongolian clothing, Avah Shelby told how next year's Christian professors will be allowed to teach in universities in Beijing, China. Doors are also opening for other Christian professionals to participate through similar exchange programs, "not to go and preach, but to model the Christian life as they practice their profession."

John Shelby then asked Southern Baptists to pray that a Christian witness could become a reality in Mongolia, which does not have a Bible translated in the national language.

"Until we make more progress, three million people will wait to hear about Christ," he said.

The women re-elected Marjorie J. McCullough of Alexandria, La., president of WMU for 1989-90, and Pattie T. Dent of Holly Springs, Miss., recording secretary.

Pastors' Conference wrapup

Elliff elected, Rogers speaks of barriers

By Jim Lowrey and Louis Moore

LAS VEGAS — Encouragement, hope and guidance were offered by a battery of preachers at the two-day Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference for clergymen who must deal with the stresses of ministry.

Pastors elected Tom Elliff as their conference president without opposition. He is pastor of First Southern Church, Del City, Okla.

In the closing session, former SBC President Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., called on Southern Baptist

preachers to mount a campaign against all forms of sin and degradation in the United States by holding higher faith in Jesus Christ.

"Our job is to lift up the truth (of Jesus Christ) so judgment, justice, and equity can enter."

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church, said, "America is in serious trouble. Our days as the land of the free and the home of the brave are numbered. We pray, 'Oh, God, do something.' But he doesn't because sin has built a bar-

rier between this nation and God."

Rogers said abortion, pornography, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual immorality, dishonesty, and other sins are responsible for social and moral chaos in the country today.

Meanwhile, other speakers urged pastors to guard against forces that threaten their ministries.

"It is essential that God's men and women understand how to deal with conflict," said Charles Stanley, former SBC president and pastor of First Church, Atlanta. "We are in a battle with Satan, and he will do all he can to destroy your ministry and divide your church."

"God will equip you and give you strength to continue," Stanley said.

When church members sense fear or see compromise, "you begin to lose your place of leadership and you lose respect as a leader," he told the pastors.

Stanley also warned pastors about running from conflict, because it was possible they could run out of the will of God. He added that it is not the place of a friend to seek to find a place for someone who seems to be in the middle of a difficult situation. Instead, he said the person should seek the leadership of God.

If pastors would set aside time to have a personal, quiet time with God, several things would happen which would help them build strength and be confident in dealing with conflict, Stanley predicted.

"God will make you sensitive to what is happening in the situation. He will renew you physically and emotionally. God also will reassure

Religious and Civil Rights, Presbyterian Church, and National Council of Churches filed a brief urging Supreme Court intervention. An attorney for the four groups said that if a church can be forced to pay damages for successful recruiting, it will have a "serious chilling effect" on evangelism.

The Court's refusal to hear the appeal may mean only that the Court wants to have the case go to trial before it hears the case. "We're not too surprised they turned it down," admitted Jeffrey Ross, a San Francisco attorney who is representing the Unification Church. "They usually want to hear a case when it's final."

Oral Roberts raises needed millions

TULSA, Okla. (EP) — Oral Roberts says he's raised the \$11 million needed to keep his ministry alive. In a live broadcast May 16, Roberts said the final \$24,000 of the needed money had been raised.

Roberts said in March that Oral Roberts University (ORU) needed the money by the date of its commencement ceremony, May 6, or creditors would begin to dismantle the school and other related ministries. At that time he said \$11 million was owed to 4,000 creditors and suppliers of his ministry, including ORU and the City of Faith Medical Center.



Pastors' conference officers

Ralph Smith, (front, center) pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, and outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, presents the organization's new officers: (from left) Robert Holmes, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Henderson, Nev., secretary-treasurer; Ron Hart, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Tucson, Ariz., vice president; and President Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., accompanied by his wife, Jeannie. The Pastors' Conference convened, immediately prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Las Vegas. (Photo by Paul Obregon)

you of his presence and will refocus attention from conflict and put it on him.

"Keep your eyes on Christ. When your eyes are on Jesus Christ, there is nothing you cannot face victoriously."

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis of Atlanta, challenged the pastors to make soul winning a top priority of their ministries.

"There is no greater need in the Southern Baptist Convention than for soul winners. Pastors, deacons, evangelists, and Sunday School teachers all need to be recommitted to be soul winners."

Texas pastor Daryl Gilyard challenged the pastors to "take your eyes off your circumstances and difficulties and Jesus will bring triumph out of your tragedy. Jesus enables us to meet whatever challenge we have with confidence."

After a personal testimony of how he never knew his parents and lived five years under a bridge, Gilyard, pastor of Shiloh Church, Garland, said, "I decided that the only way to rise out of the mud of self pity was to put my eyes on Jesus. When I took my eyes off myself and put my eyes on Jesus, a peace came over me."

John Bisagno, pastor of First Church, Houston, called the pastors to spiritual renewal as a step toward revival in their churches.

"America and the Southern Baptist Convention need revival," Bisagno said. "I believe all the committees and discussions and analysis are not going to change America. Somehow, the

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Forum speaks on priesthood, awards Carolyn Weatherford

By Art Toalston

LAS VEGAS — Words buttressing a historic Baptist doctrine, the priesthood of the believer, were heard with regularity Monday during the Southern Baptist Forum.

The forum, which drew around 700, also honored Carolyn Weatherford, outgoing executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union, with its "Denominational Statesperson Award." The forum commended her for playing a key role in keeping the Birmingham-based agency above the denominational fray.

The forum heard addresses by two non-Baptists, Robert Schuller, TV preacher, author and pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif., and Fredd Craddock, professor of New Testament and preaching at Emory University's United Methodist Candler School of Theology in Atlanta.

Two other forum speakers took direct aim at a resolution "On the Priesthood of the Believer" from the Southern Baptist Convention last year in San Antonio.

The doctrine received "cavalier treatment" from the resolutions committee that initiated the stance last year, charged Molly Marshall-Green, associate dean of the school of theology and assistant professor of theology at Southern Seminary.

She also enunciated several components of the priesthood of the believer relevant "in our Baptist life today." Among them: "resistance to authoritarian pastoral leadership."

Clyde Fant, chaplain at Stetson University, Deland, Fla., said that "pulpit popes" who view themselves as infallible are undermining the priesthood of the believer.

He noted that "eventually, there is

no room for the Bible — the Bible as it really is. It's too open, too varied" for "fundamentalist interpreters."

The believer's-priesthood resolution was adopted by messengers by about a 10 percent margin after attempts failed to amend or refer it to the convention's Executive Committee.

The resolution, while affirming the priesthood of the believer, stated that the doctrine "in no way contradicts the biblical understanding of the role, responsibility, and authority of the pastor," who is "called of God to lead the local church."

The resolution charged that the doctrine "has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist."

The priesthood of the believer does not make faith "the privatized domain of the individual," Marshall-Green said, nor does it license a person to say, "Nobody can tell me what to believe."

But, she said, "no council, creed, confession, or presumptuous creep (must) usurp the position that belongs to God alone."

Weatherford has led the 1.2-million-member missions education organization for women, girls and preschoolers for 15 years. She will take early retirement in August just before her marriage to Cincinnati pastor Joe Crumpler.

"I am not leaving denominational statesmanship," she told the forum. She said she will continue to pursue "a vision of a fractured convention being made whole again."

European Baptists now operate Ruschlikon

By Stanley Crabb & Art Toalston

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP) — Europeans feel both gratitude and "trembling in our hearts" in owning Baptist Theological Seminary here, said Knud Wumpelmann, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.

Wumpelmann's comments came as he represented European Baptists in receiving a symbolic key to the Ruschlikon seminary from Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks.

The ceremony kicked off a May 28-30 consultation on the future of the seminary, pooling ideas from 67 leaders of 21 of the 27 national Baptist unions belonging to the European Baptist Federation.

"Ruschlikon is 'the' European Baptist seminary," Wumpelmann said. "It is our responsibility. It is our great opportunity."

"We pledge to use this gift to the best of our ability that it may continue to serve the unity of European Baptists and to create well-equipped leadership for this continent and other

parts of the world as well."

Discussion of the property transfer dates back more than a decade. It flowed from the Foreign Mission Board's philosophy that institutions and programs should become "indigenous" or owned, governed and supported by overseas Baptists ready to assume the responsibility.

European Baptist Federation leaders formally requested transfer of the property when they met last fall with five Foreign Mission Board trustees assigned to "listen and gather information" about concerns involving the seminary.

Foreign Mission Board trustees subsequently voted to move ahead with the transaction, conditioned upon efforts to implement several recommendations.

Among them were drafting a charter to guide the operation of the seminary and developing a statement of biblical principles shared by European Baptists "to which seminary teachers would subscribe."



Evangelists' officers

Officers of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists are (from left) Larry McFadden, assistant music director, Orlando, Fla.; Alan B. Celoria, music director, Jackson, Miss.; Tom Cox, parliamentarian, Mountainburg, Ark.; John Box, vice president, Orlando, Fla.; Jay Strack, president, Dallas, Texas; and Richard Lee, pastor adviser, Atlanta. The organization sponsored an evangelistic rally during the Wednesday afternoon break in the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 13-15 in Las Vegas, Nev. (Photo by Paul Obregon)

"God is in control," directors of missions hear

By Terry Barone

LAS VEGAS — Southern Baptist directors of missions were challenged at their annual two-day meeting here to help congregations grow "Great Commission" churches and to not let problems hinder their work "because God is in control."

Mark Short, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Alexandria, said when the majority of churches in the SBC have either plateaued or are dying, they need to channel more energy into "evangelism and outreach" and less attention to "maintaining the fellowship."

Short said churches need help with "priority planning" in order to reach the unsaved, children and teenagers enrolled in SBC Sunday Schools, and non-resident (unlisted) church members.

The 250 directors from across the nation who attended the conference preceding the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention heard D. L. Lowrie, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, warn they may have to "suffer" for God, but that their "suffering will enhance the ministry."

Illustrating his point, Lowrie said both Lottie Moon and Corrie Ten Boom did "more for the cause of God through their suffering than through their ministry."

He also encouraged the directors to remember that "you can't bind God" and that he is in control.

"What happens," Lowrie said, "is in the hands of God, not in the hands of the officers of the SBC or trustees or boards or institutions or me or you. What happens ultimately is in the hands of God."

"So, let's let God be God. He is not weary, discouraged or tired. Our God is able. Let's serve him."

In keeping with the theme of the conference, "The Association on the Frontier," Mack Smoke, president of the conference and director of missions of the San Jacinto Baptist Association in Baytown, Texas, encouraged his fellow directors to be pioneers in order to be effective in associational work.

To be effective, Smoke said pioneers must have the courage to face obstacles and the unknown, take the initiative to plot a course others can follow, be willing to make mistakes and suffer the consequences and be willing to be a stepping stone for those to follow.

F. Russell Bennett of Long Run Baptist Association, Louisville, Ky., was elected president, and Glen Hickey of Pulaski Baptist Association, Little Rock, Ark., was elected first vice president.

Others elected include Ken Chadwick of Salt Lake and Rainbow Canyon Baptist Association in Utah, second vice president; A. Lawrence Clegg of Chappapeela Baptist Association in Ponchatoula, La., secretary; Phill G. Hall of Southeast Iowa Baptist Association in Albia, Iowa, treasurer; Grayson Glass of Galveston Baptist Association in Galveston, Texas, newsletter editor; and J. R. Blakeney of the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans, host director, 1990.

The directors voted to ask the officers of the conference to work with the appropriate agencies within the convention (SBC) to change the name of Associational Emphasis Week to Associational Missions Week. The motion was made by Russell Barker of the Atlanta Baptist Association.

Proposed changes in the conference

constitution were presented. They will be discussed and voted on at next year's meeting.

The conference featured directors of missions from different parts of the nation who gave testimonies as to how associations could be in the forefront of missions and ministry.

At a first-time worship service sponsored by the directors prior to the beginning of the conference, \$1,010 was collected and designated for a new church in Las Vegas.

Also, 49 directors of missions were honored for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service.

Glenn Toomey of Nolachucky Baptist Association, Morristown, Tenn., was honored for 35 years of service.

Honored for 30 years were Eugene B. Hager of South Yadkin Baptist Association, Statesville, N.C., and Thomas L. Lewis of West Union Baptist Association, Paducah, Ky.

Honored for 25 years were Fred B. Lunsford of Truett Baptist Association, Marble, N.C., and Kenneth Sparkman of Gibson County Baptist Association, Trenton, Tenn.

"Being called minister does not protect"

LAS VEGAS — Southern Baptist ministers of education are struggling with the reality that the label "minister" does not protect them from a world of pressures, Larry McSwain, dean of the school of theology at Southern Seminary, told 250 religious educators at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association.

Unfortunately, ministers find themselves participating in the "pains of life" just as everyone else, McSwain added.

Trying to fulfill too many areas of competency at one time causes "role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict" that often is difficult to handle, he said.

"We fail to care about ourselves enough to share our pains with each other," McSwain said. "Every minister needs to find someone outside of the ministry to be their 'pastor'."

Bill L. Taylor, associate pastor/minister of education at Prestonwood Church, Dallas, said Southern Baptists are going through "troubled waters."

Noting that 57 percent of the more than 37,000 Southern Baptist churches reported five or fewer baptisms in 1988, Taylor urged conferees to look at role models of the past for building Sunday School programs and increasing baptisms.

In business sessions, Bob Edd Shotwell, minister of education/administration, Hyde Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, was elected association president for 1989-90.

'Last Temptation' coming on tape

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. (EP) — Martin Scorsese's controversial film, "The Last Temptation of Christ," is coming to video stores June 29. MCA Home video plans a very quiet release without advertising.

SBC Pastor's Conference

(Continued from page 5)

breath of God has got to come on Southern Baptists.

"If you really mean business, put away strange gods and confess your sins," Bisagno told the pastors.

Tom Elliff, told the pastors to "come to God on his terms. If you hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

"You don't come to God when you want to, you come when he calls you or not at all," Elliff said. "God wants you to agree with him today."

John Click, pastor of Immanuel Church, Wichita, Kans., said "A doctrinal stance has no impact if it is not baptized in agape love," he warned. "A loveless gospel is a dead, ineffective, fruitless gospel. It is no gospel. Stand your ground, but stand lovingly."

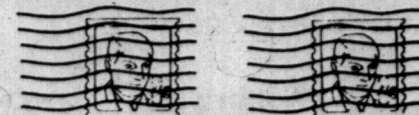
Another speaker, J. Harold Smith, president of Radio Bible Hour Inc., Newport, Tenn., said he has "never been prouder to be a Southern Baptist than during the last 10 years (when the SBC has been engaged in doctrinal controversy)."

"I am proud of our past president and our present leadership," he said.

Ron Hart, pastor of First Southern Church, Tucson, Ariz., also was elected unanimously as first vice president. Robert Holmes, pastor of First Southern Church, Henderson, Nev., was elected secretary-treasurer.



Letters to the editor



Letters to the editor must be limited to 300 words and the editor reserves the right to trim those that are longer. Editorial prerogatives must be reserved under all circumstances, and the opinions of the letter writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Baptist Record. Only signed letters will be used, but the writer may request that his name be withheld. The withholding of names will be at the discretion of the editor.

Nominating error

Dear Editor:

It has been my privilege this year to serve alongside Gene Simmons of Jackson on the Committee on Nominations from the S.B.C. During the recent Convention in Las Vegas, a subversive event occurred that deeply grieved me. As any member of the Committee on Nominations could attest (i.e. June 2, 1989 supplemental list of nominees), the nominee to the Home Mission Board from Mississippi was a layman named Jerry Caffey. Mr. Caffey is a deacon and Sunday School teacher in the First Baptist Church of Gulfport and a bold witness for Christ. He has served as a staff person with Athletes in Action, a branch of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Monday prior to the opening of Convention business on Tuesday, Mr. Caffey's name was stricken and replaced by Mr. Greg Martin of Long Beach. Neither I nor Gene Simmons was notified about this change. When Mr. Simmons confronted Joe Reynolds, chairman of the Committee on Nominations, about the change, Mr. Reynolds informed him that a Mississippi group and a Jackson pastor had lobbied for Mr. Martin and the sub-committee acquiesced to the change. What makes this matter so distressing is that the Committee on Nominations has a policy recommendation that states "in no case shall the sub-committee nominate a person to fill the vacancy without the knowledge of at least one state member."

I believe it is crucial that we understand that this issue is not a conflict of credentials regarding either nominee. Both Mr. Caffey and Mr. Martin are exemplary Christian leaders. What is at stake is the issue of trust among brothers and sisters in Christ. If a sub-

committee refuses to trust other members of the Committee then the whole procedure of nominating is discredited and should be abolished.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ give us courage to stand for what is right and compassion to love one another even when we disagree.

Dean Register
First Baptist, Gulfport

The Moyers tapes

Editor:

Say it isn't so! The man from St. Louis who wrote a letter in the June 6 edition of Baptist Record is not aware that in Feb., 1989, Paul Pressler, brought a resolution to the SBC Executive Committee asking it to call on the SBC to protest Bill Moyers' program, "Battle for the Bible." Pressler claimed the program was biased, federal dollars were used to support this program, and the timing of the program was to influence one faction of the SBC. His motion was approved.

Subsequently, Moyers responded requesting a hearing before the SBC Executive Committee in June. Denied this, Moyers broadcast the program on May 21, or thereabout, so people could make their own judgment. Moyers is confident enough in his own integrity and professionalism to allow individual interpretation. By the way, PBS is financed with 85 percent member contributions, with only a minute portion coming from public funds.

Pressler claimed that he made 50 speeches for the fundamental takeover in the late 70's in one week's time — spending only three hours a week in his office and spending time in hotel rooms looking over cases. I say the public can't afford to pay a

judge this high salary with such little attention to business!

Bill Moyers, may your tribe increase!

Carolyn Carter
Jacksonville, FL

The Moyers tape

Editor:

It is hard to believe a person could be so uninformed as to write such a letter as was in the June 6 issue of the Baptist Record concerning Bill Moyers' tape. I have ordered the transcripts of all the "God and Politics — a Kingdom Divided" transcripts and have studied them carefully. Mr. Moyers won the prestigious Wilbur award from the Religious Public Relations Council for this series of programs of which "Battle for the Bible" was a segment. I salute Mr. Moyers for being a Christian, a Southern Baptist in the true sense, and a respected journalist who is courageous enough to broadcast religious news as it truly is. I thank God for such a man of integrity as Bill Moyers.

Frances Land
Toomsaba

Leadership roles

Editor:

I felt there must be a reply to the letter entitled "Church role of women" in the last issue of the Baptist Record, June 8th, based on scripture.

As well as history and Latin, God's Word also states that "the head of the woman is man." (I Cor. 11:3). "Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." (I Cor. 11:9). As it was in the beginning, a woman's desire shall be to her husband and he shall rule over her (Gen. 3:16), and is now until the end (Matt. 5:18). A woman should learn in quietness and in full submission, and woman should not be allowed to teach or exercise authority over man. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve (I Tim. 2:11-13). The woman is the weaker, and should be shown respect by the man (I Peter 3:7).

As for the role of women, they are to be teachers of young women, to be a witness by their behavior, to be keepers of the home, and to be obedient to their husbands that the Word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5).

As for the letter to Timothy to be rewritten, so must much of God's Word for it to agree with the church role of women as stated by the letter addressed. Because there is no contradictory statement in God's Word. Proverbs 30:6 states, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

So as Christian men we are responsible for fulfilling the leadership roles in our homes first (I Tim. 3:5), in our churches, and in our government. If we fail to do so, we fall into the category of people described in Isa. 3:11-12. Let us not be so liberal and idle as to let the word of God be changed, misinterpreted, or misunderstood.

Michael Simpson
Clinton

Stamps for food

Editor:

I have been sending used stamps to enclosed address since I read about them in the Baptist Record about three years ago.

I always mark "Return postage guaranteed." I have not had any problems until recently. I decided to check for correct address as they did not acknowledge receipts. I sent a stamped envelope and received this notice (yellow) enclosed.

Do you have any information on anyone using cancelled stamps for benevolent purposes?

There is a lady in California who collects for a premature baby treatment center. I believe that I can reach her through a mutual friend unless you have information otherwise.

Since I have a great many on hand, I will hold for awhile will not destroy.

Frances M. Wilbanks
Walnut

I have no other information. This

was a USPS notice that the addressee had moved and left no further address. Sometimes those reports are in error. The only suggestion would be to try again and see if the results are the same. More than likely, they will be.

— Editor

The fund balance

Editor:

On May 25 the attached photo appeared in the Baptist Record (Earl Kelly retirement banquet). I believe there is a misstatement in the caption under the photo that needs to be corrected. It says that "the car, purchased as a gift for Dr. Kelly was purchased out of the Board's fund balance." This, in my opinion, says that \$19,000 was spent from regular funds, cooperative fund monies submitted by member churches. I'm sure this is not the case. No one would doubt the service that Dr. Kelly rendered to the convention, but for the Board to use regular funds for a gift is totally unbelievable and must not be permitted.

Thomas W. Williamson
Jackson

You are right. It did not come out of "regular funds, cooperative fund monies submitted by member churches." The fund balance is a reserve fund that is separate from the Cooperative Program income.

A part of the fund balance is interest earned in short-term situations when Cooperative Program designations are left in banks over night or over weekends before they can be moved to their destinations. Such movements, however, are never delayed in order to earn interest. The fund balance is used only at the discretion of the Executive Committee. — Editor

Mississippi recommendation replaced before SBC

By Tim Nicholas

The nominee suggested by Mississippi representatives on the SBC Committee on Nominations was replaced during a sub-committee meeting without the knowledge of the Mississippians.

Eugene Simmons of Jackson and Dean Register of Gulfport, Mississippians on the Committee on Nominations, at the committee meeting in March, suggested Tommy Vinson, pastor of Crossgates Church, Brandon, to serve in a vacancy on the Home Mission Board. During that meeting, according to Register, pastor of First Church, Gulfport, the chairman, Joe Reynolds of Houston, told them they needed a layman instead of a pastor to keep the balance of laymen and ministers on the HMB.

A week later, the two representatives agreed on Jerry Caffey, a lay member of First Church, Gulfport, who assented to serve, as their nominee and informed Chairman Reynolds of their choice.

But the person listed in the convention bulletin and elected by messengers to the HMB from Mississippi was Greg Martin, pastor of Commission Road Church, Long Beach.

In an attempt to reconstruct events, the Baptist Record has spoken to principals, except for Joe Reynolds who

was unavailable for comment by press time.

As of June 2, Caffey's name was on the supplemental list to be dealt with by the sub-committee when it met in Las Vegas. But between that meeting on June 11 and the next day when the sub-committee apparently met again, Caffey's name was dropped and Martin's name added.

The written policy of the committee on nominations states that when a person declines to serve or is otherwise ineligible, "the subcommittee is responsible to nominate a person to fill each vacancy, seeking first to obtain the suggested nomination of both state members from the state in which the vacancy occurs, but in no case shall the subcommittee nominate a person to fill the vacancy without the knowledge of at least one state member."

Both Register and Simmons say they were never informed of a change from their suggested nominee. Register did not attend the convention, but was at home in Gulfport. Simmons attended the convention as a registered messenger from First Church, Jackson.

Gerald Harris, pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, said he heard that there was an opening on the HMB, that the original nomination was Tommy Vinson, and that "for

some reason, he was not going to serve," said Harris.

Harris said that in conversation with a layman from First Church, Jackson, whom he declined to name, he heard that no one was nominated for the HMB slot. Harris said that he wanted a conservative person on the board and wanted to make sure that another member of First Church, Jackson, would not be nominated. He said that already Robbie Hughes is on the Public Affairs Committee, Reuel May is on the committee on order of business, Curtis Caine is on the Christian Life Commission, Bobby Arnold was the nominee for Golden Gate Seminary, and Jerry Lee had just gone off the Sunday School Board. He said service should be spread around more.

Harris said he mailed to Reynolds a few days before the convention a list of several suggestions for the post including Martin; P. J. Scott, pastor of First Church, Olive Branch; and another person suggested to him by Billy Beckett, pastor of Shiloh Church, Corinth. He also left copies of the suggestions at the hotel desk for Reynolds.

"I have never met Joe Reynolds, I never talked to him on the phone. I did not know that we were not going to have any representatives at that meeting from Mississippi," said Har-

ris. "The first time Jerry Caffey's name was mentioned in my presence was after I got back to Jackson."

He added, "The truth of the matter is... with the way the convention has been in recent years, the committee on nominations people need to be there to defend their candidates. I was not making any attempt to challenge any nominations I knew about."

Simmons, who was not on the sub-committee, said he confronted Reynolds before he went to the platform with the list for election, saying that Martin was not their nominee, that Caffey was. Simmons said Reynolds said a group lobbied and a Jackson pastor lobbied for Martin and the subcommittee gave in to the change.

"It stinks," said Simmons. "It's just not right."

"I don't like that kind of politics. It's disgusting," said Register. "I am deeply grieved over the whole matter. It's a sad, sad time when Southern Baptists have to politic instead of pray and have to jockey for positions instead of trusting their brothers and sisters in Christ."

Martin said he was surprised to hear that he had been named to replace another nominee. "I had nothing to do with it," he said. He said that Harris had told him that he was going to suggest Martin for the post,

but that Martin did not know of the Mississippi representatives' suggestion of Caffey.

Martin said he was upset that an article in the Mississippi Gulf Coast's Sun-Herald had made a connection between Martin's involvement with conservative denominational politics and the nomination. Martin and Harris are both active in the Mississippi Conservative Baptist Fellowship. "I am not a fundamentalist... yes, I am an inerrantist. Yes, I believe we have some problems in our schools and they need to be straightened out." But, he added, I won't believe until its proven otherwise this was politically motivated.

He said Caffey, formerly on staff of Athletes in Action, would be having lunch with him and Register on Tuesday of this week after speaking at the Gulf Coast pastors' conference along with Register. He said Caffey is a friend of his and he is going to have him at Commission Road for Baptist Men's Day services.

Martin said he planned to accept service on the HMB and ask that next year's nominating committee invite Caffey to serve on either the HMB or Foreign Mission Board.

"Before the Lord, my wife, and my church, I haven't done a thing wrong," said Martin. "I hope it's just a big mistake."

Secretary certification offered at two levels



Gandy

Posey

Basic and advanced certification courses are to be offered for church secretaries, Aug. 1-4 and Aug. 1-3, respectively.

The seminars will take place at the Baptist Building in Jackson. Cost of the basic class is \$65; the advanced is \$15 for a one-time enrollment fee

and \$17.50 for each module.

Basic certification, according to materials, focuses on the church, the secretary's role, personal development, records management, communication, church finance, and organization and management.

The advanced certification offers two of the four modules needed to achieve advanced certification: the secretary as a growth agent and office relationships and teamwork.

Leader for the basic course will be Glenda Posey, records and assistant financial secretary at Summer Grove Church, Shreveport, La. Donna Gandy will lead the advanced courses. She is a consultant for church secretaries in the Church Administration Department of the Sunday School Board.

We need you, Lewis says to black Southern Baptists

LAS VEGAS — The Southern Baptist Convention needs the help of black Southern Baptists to reach lost souls for Christ, Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board, Atlanta, said.

In an address to the Southern Baptist Black Church Extension Fellowship, Lewis added: "If we are going to fulfill our Lord's command to share the gospel with every creature... We need you."

Focusing on the text found in Acts 10:34-35, he emphasized that "God is no respecter of persons... Every man, woman, boy and girl born into this world is born in the image of our God, and thus, every nation, every

ethnæ of people needs to hear about Jesus.

"There is nobody outside the bounds of God's love; Jesus died for the whole world," Lewis said.

"If we are under the mandate to share the gospel with every creature, the Great Commission drives us into the home and heart of every human being, regardless of his race or his color or his ethnic background," he continued. "Our bold mission thrust to share the gospel is a sincere and genuine commitment to win souls and plan churches anywhere people are — regardless of who they are."

"We need you because black America is lost without you," Lewis said.

Cooperative Program income slightly ahead of 1988 giving

NASHVILLE (BP) — Year-to-date receipts for the Southern Baptist convention-wide ministry budget remain slightly ahead of last year's pace, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

The national Cooperative Program received \$10,853,842 in May, pushing the year-to-date total to \$92,215,605, Bennett reported.

The cumulative total is slightly more than \$2.2 million, or 2.47 percent, ahead of last year's pace. That compares to a U.S. inflation rate of 5.1 percent.

The May total is almost \$1.1 million,

or 9.2 percent, below receipts for May 1988.

Since the current fiscal year began last October, Cooperative Program monthly totals have dropped below totals for the same months the previous year five out of eight times. However, this fiscal year's budget boasts two of the three best single-month totals in the budget's 64-year history.

To reach its \$145.6 million overall goal, Cooperative Program monthly receipts must average more than \$13.3 million for the balance of the fiscal year. To reach its \$137.61 million basic operating goal, the budget must take in more than \$11.3 million each month.

Fellowship of Baptist Men to use multi-media promotion

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Missions education and promotion will take on a new dimension in the Southern Baptist Convention as the National Fellowship of Baptist Men expands its concert series, fellowship leaders announced.

The fellowship has contracted with newly formed Master Communication Media to plan, promote and present Southern Baptist missions to local churches with a multi-media exposition and live concerts. Up to 150 concert artists will be endorsed by the

fellowship to make the missions presentation.

The national fellowship, a ministry of the Brotherhood Commission's adult division, recruits missions volunteers according to their skills, interests and vocations. Fourteen special-interest fellowships have been started.

Fellowship Director Bob Salley said the multi-media exposition produced by Master Communications will teach about all aspects of Southern Baptist missions, including the Cooperative Program unified budget.



State missions aids Mineral Wells Church

Mineral Wells Church, Mineral Wells, is building an educational building with the grant in aid from the Mississippi State Mission Fund. Pictured, Keith Wilson, member of the Mississippi Baptist Executive Board Committee, is presenting a check to J. E. Williams, pastor, in the amount of \$2,500, the last of the grant of \$7,500 total.

Clear Creek (Smith) to celebrate 150th

Clear Creek Church, Taylorsville, will celebrate its 150th anniversary on July 23. Services will be 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. A covered dish dinner will be held on the grounds. There will be former pastors and families present. Randy D. Culpepper is pastor.

Names in the news

Tommy Tapp, Monroe Associational Church Training director, was named Mississippi Associational Church



Tapp

Training Director of the year by Mose Dangerfield, director of Church Training for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Tapp is a member of First Church, Amory and is senior vice president of the Bank of Amory.

MEMPHIS, Tenn., (BP) — Tim Yarbrough, 28, has been named Baptist Young Men's editor by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission. He will be responsible for all missions education curriculum materials produced for young men ages 18-34, including World Mission Journal-Baptist Young Men's edition.

MURFREESBORO, N.C. (BP) — Chowan College trustees elected Jerry F. Jackson president May 16.

Jackson, 50, vice president for development at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, will begin his tenure Aug. 3. He will succeed Bruce E. Whitaker, who is retiring after 32 years as president of the North Carolina Baptist-related institution.



Amanda Burton, member of Colonial Heights (Jackson), received her Girl Scout God and Family Award on May 28, during the evening service. Pictured with Amanda are, from left, Gerald Harris, Colonial Heights' pastor, and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Burton. Mrs. Florence Cooper is her troop leader.

Jones students in Houston give 1,000 loaves of bread

A spot mission trip to the inner city of Houston, Texas was conducted May 14-21 by 12 individuals from Jones County Junior College, by the BSU.

In Houston, working with missionary Mildred McWhorter in three centers, the team was involved in Bible studies, teen clubs, devotionals, puppets, drama, evangelism, construction work, children and nursery work, sorting and bagging food for the hungry. The last two hours the team worked they gave away 1,000 loaves of bread.

"Physical bread sometimes must be given before the bread of life can be introduced. It was an excellent service and ministry opportunity for our students," said John F. Sumner Jr., BSU director, Jones JC.

The team included BSU director, John Sumner; assistant BSU director, Frank Porter; and a carpenter from Laurel and former BSU student, Jerry Morris. Students on the team were Beth Anglin, Pascagoula; Kalinda Byrd, Laurel; Amy Cameron, Ocean Springs; Chad Caraway, Sandersville; Tonya Craft, Laurel; Kevin Jones, Laurel; McKay Pearce, Purvis; Patrick Scoggin, Ellisville; and Scott Walters, Ellisville.



Scott Walters finds a new friend.

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The Master Designer

Billy G. Johnson
Ephesians 2:10

A visiting friend of a skilled craftsman observed one day as his friend used his imaginative mind and skillful hands to form a beautiful product out of a piece of wood. The visiting friend thought, "God is like that. He is able to take a human being and make that human being into a beautiful life. God is a Master Designer."



Johnson

Paul thought of God in this way when he said, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). The Greek word translated "workmanship" is a word which means creation, handiwork, or poem. The believer is the workmanship of God's grace. In the passage prior to verse 10, Paul describes the product with which God works in a number of ways.

God has an impossible product with which to work. Paul describes us as being "dead in trespasses and sins." He pictures us as being dominated by the world, and the devil and as walking according to the pattern of this world. However, Paul declares that God has something more than an impossible product with which to work; he has an incredible power with which to design. God's incredible mercy prompts the power of God to save us rather than destroy us. The power of God changes our lives and makes us into the vessels he wants us to be. He "quickens us together with Christ" and raises us to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The indomitable purpose which God seeks to accomplish with this impossible product with which he works is that we would be exhibitions of his grace. Just as every designer, artist, craftsman enjoys displaying his products as example of his work, so we are trophies of God's grace. He points to us and says to the world and the devil, "See him, he is an example of my grace." Let us seek to be worthy examples of his workmanship.

Johnson is pastor, Dixie Church, Hattiesburg.

Revival dates

Philadelphia, (Lafayette): June 25-28. Sun. services, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; Bob Hamblin, Tupelo, evangelist; Eddie Thompson, Hillcrest, New Albany, music; H. L. Barnes, Jr., pastor.

Mt. Creek, Florence: June 25-29; Steve Mize, Monticello, Ark., evangelist; Curtis Carter and Cindy Blaine, music; Sunday, regular services, lunch at church; 7:30 p.m. each night; Les Hughes, pastor.

Sand Hill (Greene): June 30-July 2; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds; Wayne Van Horn, Old Testament professor at New Orleans Seminary, evangelist; Gary A. White, pastor.

Good Hope (Leake): June 25-30; regular times on Sunday; 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. during the week; Charles Broome, pastor, Rocky Hill, (Smith), evangelist; Mark Gunn, director of music; Brenda Chennault, pianist; Odell Tebo, pastor.

Knox (Walthall): June 25-28; Sunday, regular services with dinner served; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; John D. Wilton, pastor, teacher and evangelist of Long Beach, guest speaker; Paul Smith, pastor.

Leaf River (Smith): June 28-July 2; Ken Jordan, pastor, Chewalla Church, Chewalla, Tenn., evangelist; Wed.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday services, Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship, 11 a.m., covered dish lunch, Rouse Family, Lumberton, singing at 1:30 p.m.; Edd Holloman, pastor.

Senior adult corner

First Church, Anguilla, honored its senior members with a catfish supper on May 6. The supper was followed by a style show put on by the senior adults. The senior adults were in charge of the Sunday morning services with most of them singing in the choir. Together the 16 senior members have served the Lord 918 years.

Sebastopol, Sebastopol: June 25-29; 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily; Steve West, evangelist from Hillsboro; John Sharp, pastor; Susan Horton, music.

Ted, Smith: June 25-30; Sunday, worship, 11 a.m.; lunch following; Mon.-Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Ferrell Morris, evangelist; Wilber Holifield, music; Keith Bogan, pastor.

Revival results

Freedom (Jones): June 4-9; Dan Springfield, evangelist; Sandy Springfield, soloist; Tracy Hipps, pastor; 54 deacons made.

Homecomings

Palestine, Harrisville: June 25; Robert Andrews, pastor, speaker for morning worship service; lunch served in fellowship hall following services; afternoon singing and business meeting; offerings of the day will go for cemetery fund.

Spring Hill (Marshall): June 25; Sunday School, 10; dedication service, 11 a.m., for newly remodeled sanctuary; Don Stanfill, director of missions, Marshall-Lafayette Association, guest speaker; lunch following morning services; afternoon services will be a time of singing; Jimmy Smith, pastor.

Mt Nebo, Collinsville (Newton): June 25; regular morning services; lunch served at noon in fellowship hall; 1:30 p.m. service, special singing, Herman Pilgrim, former pastor, master of ceremonies, memorial services, and visits from former pastors; Michael Truhett, pastor.

Gatesville (Copiah): June 25; Dexter Ware, speaker; Phil Mullens, pastor; Roland Dear, song director.

Shubuta (Clarke): June 25; guest speaker will be Avery Jones, West Point, at 11 a.m.; lunch will follow in U.C. Wells Annex.

Beulah, Inverness: June 25; local singing starts at 10 a.m.; lunch served at noon; afternoon, singing by the, "The Gospel Notes," Cleveland, 1:30.

Sunrise Church, Petal, has recently called Robert and Wanda Fennell as music/youth directors. Robert will be a senior music major this fall at University of Southern Mississippi.

Dennis R. Jones accepted the pastorate of State Boulevard Church, Meridian, and began his ministry on Sunday, May 28. Jones is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary. He goes to State Boulevard from Parkview Church, Morehead City, N.C.



Jones

Just for the Record

Byram Church, Jackson, will have Vacation Bible School, June 26-30, from 9 a.m.-noon for ages 3-12, and from 7-9 p.m. for youth grades 7-12. There will be a special parade June 24 at 10 a.m. James D. Whittington is pastor.

Woodville Heights Church, Jackson, will celebrate its 30th anniversary on June 25. Sunday School will be at 9:15 a.m. and worship service at 10:30 a.m. A covered dish lunch will be served at noon. The 7 p.m. worship service will be a patriotic musical program "Liberty" presented by the youth choir of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

Cherry Park Church, Clinton, will hold Vacation Bible School for children ages 4-11, June 26-30, 7 to 9 p.m. Hollis Alderman is pastor.

Hollis Bryant, consultant, Cooperative Missions Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will be the special speaker for Terry Road Church, Jackson, June 25, at 7 p.m., Church Training will be the special emphasis. Fellowship and watermelon cutting will follow the service. Henry Bennett is pastor.

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Staff changes

Woodville Heights Church, Jackson, has recently called Dwayne Sims as minister of education and outreach. Sims last served Suburban Church, New Orleans. He is a graduate of Delta State University and New Orleans Seminary.



Sims

First Church, Tchula has called Joey Wilkinson as summer minister of music. Wilkinson is a recent graduate of Yazoo City High School and will pursue studies in music at Ole Miss this fall. He has been involved in the music and youth programs at First Church, Yazoo City.

Doug Christy has accepted a call as pastor to New Prospect Church, Iuka. He is the former pastor of Cross Roads Church in Webster County.

Glenn Kelly has accepted a call as pastor to Temple Church, 815 McCluer Road, Jackson, effective June 4. He is the former pastor of Oak Grove in Simpson County. He attended Mississippi College and is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary.

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International festival planned

National Acteens Convention open to 2,000 more registrants

By Susan Todd

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Registration for the National Acteens Convention is within 2,000 of the cutoff amount of 15,200, according to Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union officials.

NAC, scheduled for July 12-15 in San Antonio, Texas, is for Acteens, members of the missions organization for girls in grades 7-12 in local Southern Baptist churches.

Deadline for NAC registration by mail is June 26. Registration forms must be postmarked by that date.

Registration forms are available from state WMU offices and in the January 1989 issue of Accent, the Acteens magazine. A fee of \$40 per person must accompany each registration form.

If there are any places left after the June 26 forms are processed, the registration will continue on a first-come, first-served basis at the convention all day on July 12 and until noon on July 13.

Admission to all convention activities will be limited to registrants.

"In Harmony" is the theme of NAC. During daily small-group Bibles studies, the girls will focus on different ways to be in harmony with self, with God and with others.

Six general sessions will be held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Among featured home and foreign missionaries will be Mildred McWhorter and Giles and Wana Ann-Fort, the subjects of two biographies produced by WMU.

Contemporary Christian artists Karla Worley and Chuck Maxwell will be guest musicians and will give concerts each day. Scott Sontag, minister to singles and youth at the International Baptist Church of Stuttgart, West Germany, will direct the music.

La Villita, a restored village in downtown San Antonio, will be the site of an international festival on Thursday night. More than 30 food vendors

will sell a variety of international foods.

Music, drama and dance from countries around the world will be performed throughout the village. Acteens will be invited to join the performances in a talent show. The first 60 to sign up at the information desk during NAC registration will be scheduled.

Topics such as family violence, cults, peer pressure, substance abuse, suicide, decision making and sexuality will be explored in conferences slated for Thursday and Friday afternoons.

An exhibit hall full of activities will be open each afternoon. It will house a computer bank of missions games and information.

Each NAC registrant is being asked to bring at least one canned food item to the exhibit hall. At the end of NAC, the food will be packaged and delivered to the San Antonio Food Bank.

Mississippi Baptist activities

June 27 Key Leader Seminar; Baptist Building; 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (EVAN)

Golden Gate graduates 112

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP) — Golden Gate Seminary graduated 112 students, one of the largest graduating classes in the school's history, during its 41st annual spring commencement May 26.

Three students with ties to Mississippi received degrees.

Ernest C. Brunson, born in Jackson, received the doctor of philosophy degree in historical theology during the May 26 service.

Jerry St. John earned the doctor of ministry degree. He was a missionary to the deaf in Mississippi from 1963-1974.

Jeffrey A. Barnes, a graduate of William Carey College, received the master of divinity degree.

Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First Church, Oklahoma City, presented the commencement address, "Magnify Your Calling."

Hobbs told graduates they must magnify their ministry by appreciating the privilege to minister and having the proper understanding of how to function as "career ministers."

Music minister dies at age 37

David McArthur, 37, died suddenly on May 16 at his home in Decatur, Alabama, after suffering a massive heart attack. He had been music director at Westmeade Baptist Church, Decatur, for seven years.

Native of Moss Point, Miss., he had served as music and youth director at Calvary Church, Waynesboro; Chunky Church, Chunky; and churches in north Alabama. Before going to Westmeade he was in music evangelism for five years.

Survivors include his wife, Nancy, and three daughters, Amy, Dana, and Minda.

McArthur

In Romania

Church destroyed, ground plowed up

By Art Toalston

BUCHAREST, Romania (BP) — Romanian authorities arrested five members of a Baptist congregation and destroyed a church May 31, according to a report by Keston College, an English research institute monitoring religious affairs in communist countries.

The church members, including the pastor, Ioan Chivoiu, were released after several days. "All were reportedly beaten during their detention," Keston College reported. A spokesman for the institute in Kent, England, did not know exactly how long the group was jailed.

The church is located in the town of Comanesti, about 250 miles northeast of Bucharest.

Whether the congregation had proper government approval to turn a house into a church remains at issue. According to Keston College, the congregation obtained "verbal consent of the local authorities" two years ago to convert one of the members' houses

into a church.

But Vasile Talpos, former general secretary of the Baptist Union of Romania and current president of the European Baptist Federation, claimed the church never sought a building permit.

According to Keston College, the congregation fashioned the house into a 200-seat church that was "slightly bigger than had initially been agreed," but it "paid fines for this and believed the question was settled." A dedication ceremony was held last fall.

However, new leaders who took office in Comanesti declared in March that the church had been built without proper authorization and ordered it demolished, the college reported.

"The church was sealed by the authorities on several occasions to prevent the congregation (from) meeting inside, and police tried to break up gatherings outside," a news release from the college said. "The

pastor was put under surveillance by the secret police, the Securitate."

Keston said authorities blocked off surrounding streets May 31 and used heavy machinery to demolish the church. "Even trees were uprooted and the ground was plowed up. Flowers were reportedly planted, so that there was no sign that the church had ever stood on the site."

Talpos said such church demolitions do not occur often. The last time a Baptist congregation lost a building because it failed to obtain a permit was three or four years ago, he said. No one was arrested in the incident. The Baptist Union includes about 1,000 churches with 200,000 members in this country of 23 million people.

A 300-seat church was dedicated a month ago and an 800-seat church opened last year. The Baptist Seminary, he added, received permits to repair and renovate its two buildings, which were damaged in an earthquake 10 years ago.

HMB appoints first senior adult consultants

ATLANTA (BP) — Responding to increasing opportunities for senior adults in missions, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has named Ed and Re Jackson as Mission Service Corps national consultants for senior adults.

The Jacksons, from Garland, Texas, have been Mission Service Corps volunteers since 1986, working through the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

In their new role, the retired couple hope to raise awareness among senior adults about opportunities as volunteer missionaries. "Health is not the primary reason senior adults do not volunteer," Jackson said. "We haven't educated them, and we haven't led them."

The Jacksons will target local

associations, national Southern Baptist agencies and local churches with their message. Their first goal is to help every association enlist a senior adult as a volunteer senior adult missions coordinator.

One-third of the 1,200 long-term volunteers currently serving through Mission Service Corps in the United States are 65 years of age or older. Also, one-third of the 14,500 short-term Christian Service Corps volunteers are senior adults.

Senior adult mission volunteers perform a wide range of ministries:

— Truman and Lena Webb work with "snowbirds" who spend winters in the Caliente Casa De Sol recreational vehicle park in Florence, Ariz. During the peak months of January and February, 76-year-old Webb preaches

to 600 people.

— Half the winter population of the desert resort. The Webbs make hospital visits, teach Bible studies and lead the senior adults in ministry projects within the community. "Many of our senior residents have found Christ as savior, and others have found a closer walk with him," Webb reported.

— Irene Jordan from Concord, N.C., helped missionary Jerry Cruce start Mary Martha's Place, a home for battered women in Lawrenceville, Ga.

— Pat and Dave Selvy from Lambert, Miss., taught literacy classes with missionary Carolyn McClendon in New Orleans. "No football player can be more proud of his winning team's touchdown than I was each time Sam learned a new word," Selvy said about one of her pupils.

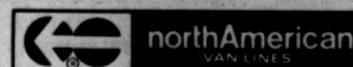
Road accidents in Thailand biggest killer

Road accidents continue to top the list as the biggest killer in Thailand, according to deputy public health minister Prasong Buranapong. Heart disease and cancer take second and third places in Thailand, respectively. (Thailand is about the size of North Carolina and South Carolina combined.)

Records show that 232,968 people were killed in road accidents in 1987. Deputy Buranapong added that the traffic death toll in 1988 surpassed this level.

Road accidents, which are called the traffic disease in Thailand, are caused by four main reasons, according to Buranapong: poor knowledge of traffic regulations, drunken driving, the taking of drugs such as amphetamines, and the vehicle being in poor condition.

"Please pray for Southern Baptist missionaries in Thailand who do a tremendous amount of traveling in connection with their work," asks Maxine Stewart, press representative for Southern Baptist missionaries in Thailand. "The missionaries are grateful for the vehicles supplied for their work by the Foreign Mission Board and for funds to help keep them in good repair."



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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON COMMENTARIES

Life's greatest choice: Joshua's challenge to Israel

By Gary Berry

Joshua 24:14-22, 26-27

The most crucial decision anyone will ever make is whether to trust God and serve him. That is a choice everyone makes. According to



Berry

Jesus, no one can claim neutrality. One either chooses God or chooses to reject him. Joshua confronted his people with the necessity of choosing whom they would serve (verses 14-15). The choice to fear God and serve him required putting away all former gods. Choosing to follow God and serve him always carries the demand to forsake everything which would occupy God's rightful place of priority. Whenever one decides

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to follow Christ today, he must also decide to "deny himself and take up his cross."

There was no hesitant or half-hearted commitment from Joshua. He didn't wait to see which way the wind of fashion or opinion would blow. His mind was made up: "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord." That is the kind of bold witness and bold example which God can use to produce results.

In response to Joshua's declaration about his intentions, all the people declared their faith in God. They recalled past deliverances of God (verses 16-18). They emphatically denied any intention of forsaking the Lord or being disloyal to him.

Joshua warned his people that to forsake the

Lord to serve other gods would invite certain disaster (verses 19-20). The response, "You cannot serve the Lord," must have caught their attention. Joshua wanted Israel to be absolutely sure they understood the seriousness of the solemn promise they had just made.

It would be appropriate even today if people were confronted more often with the seriousness of their "commitments" to God. How easy it is to vow that we will do something for God, but when it comes to implementing that decision, there is little ability. Alan Redpath is correct when he says that "the urgent need in the church of Jesus Christ today is to learn how to deal with the tragic discrepancy between our profession and our experience."

Joshua reminds the people that to provoke the jealousy of God by wilful sin and disobedience cannot be dealt with lightly. Forgiveness of sins

is not something which comes on demand. The fact that any sin is forgiven is explained by the grace of God. Nobody should presume upon the grace of God.

Despite his warnings to them, the people reaffirmed their choice to serve the Lord (verses 21-22). Joshua's challenge served to enhance the response of these people to serve God.

As an act of confirming their choice, Joshua set a stone as a witness to their decision to serve God (verses 26-27). The stone will be a silent witness to what God has spoken and to what the people have decided. It is always good to "drive down a stake" whenever a significant commitment to God is made.

Now is the only time one may choose to follow or to reject God's Son. You may not have the luxury of a tomorrow. "Today is the day of salvation..." Choose today to follow him.

Berry is pastor, Temple, Hattiesburg.

Strength gone, Samson reaps sin's results

By Greg Martin

Judges 16:19-22, 28-30

Samson is perhaps the most celebrated judge in Israel's history. Young boys marvel at the stories of his strength. Romantics enjoy reading about his love for Delilah. Soldiers are entertained by his ability as a warrior.



Martin

The story of Samson is no doubt an intriguing one. However, underneath all the glitter and glory of a superman is the story of a believer's problems and dealings with sin. From Samson's life we learn that sin diminishes our experience of God's power and weakens our capacity for service.

The narrative for our lesson begins with Samson asleep in the lap of Delilah. For days this beautiful Philistine woman had been trying to discover the secret of Samson's strength. With his great power he had destroyed much of the Philistine control over Israel. The end of his strength would mean victory for the Philistines.

At last Samson gave in and told Delilah the truth about his hair and strength. He explain-

LIFE AND WORK

ed that he was a Nazarite and thus his hair had never been cut. He explained that the seven locks of hair were the secret to his strength.

As Samson slept in the lap of Delilah, she had his hair shaved off. She bound him with a rope and then woke him up to see if he had indeed lost his strength. Samson arose but was as weak as any man. The soldiers came in to the Philistine house and captured Samson. They gouged out his eyes and led him to a prison in Gaza.

Many examine Samson's life and chide him for desiring an ungodly woman who worshipped pagan gods. They rebuke him for letting his passion for Delilah overrule his passion for serving God. While Samson was guilty of rampant hedonism, it must not be forgotten that subtle sins like slothfulness, lack of self-control, and greed were also contributors to his fall. From this narrative we see how all sinful self-indulgences hinder us from serving God.

Verse 20 reports that after Samson's head had been shaven that the Lord departed from him. Samson was in a pitiful position. He lost his

strength, the girl he loved, his respect, and, most of all, his fellowship with God. Oh, that we could learn that sin reaps the same crop in the twentieth century. It impedes our Christian growth and communion with God.

With Samson's strength gone, he was left totally at the mercies of his enemies. As our text reveals, the Philistines were not very merciful. In the Gaza prison they chained the one time strong man to a grinder wheel. There Samson was left to pay for his crimes against Philistines. One moment Samson was a free, strong, and independent man. The next he was a prisoner in the hands of his enemies.

Many modern day believers do not realize sin's debilitating effect on them until a time of crisis when it is too late. Such was the case with Samson. At his crisis point he realized how humiliating and degrading were sin's results.

Verse 22 offers a ray of hope in the midst of despair. The scripture tells us Samson's hair began to grow during those days of incarceration. The implication is that his strength would soon return. Indeed, the end of the chapter reveals that Samson's strength was fully restored.

Judges 16:28-30 introduces Samson to us in a different context. Someone has suggested that

the setting is the anniversary of the capture of Samson. His hair and strength had had plenty of time to grow.

The Philistines were celebrating the worship of their pagan god Dagon. They called for Samson to come up to be made sport of. As he was being led into the arena he rested his hands against two pillars. After a prayer for God's help and strength, he pushed the pillars out and the entire house collapsed. Everyone, including Samson, was killed. The author of Judges testified that in the destruction Samson killed more Philistines than he did in his entire lifetime. The implication is that Israel was again set free from the oppression of her enemies. A further implication is that Samson did not die in vain, but for a righteous cause.

From this story of triumph through tragedy we can learn that God restores and renews his power in our lives when we call on him in brokenness and humility. As long as his people have breath, they have the potential to be used by God when they yield to his ways.

How grateful we should be for his graciousness and forgiveness. How thankful we should be that he chooses to use us even after failure and disgrace.

Martin is pastor, Commission Road Church, Long Beach.

Paul ministers in Rome — a dream come true

By Bert Breland

Acts 28:11-31

The Apostle Paul had wanted to go to Rome for years and finally this dream was being realized. However, Paul's entrance into the city was not as he had hoped it would be. Paul was not entering the city as a free man, but rather as a prisoner. He was in chains, falsely accused, awaiting trial, and under a house arrest that prevented him the freedom of movement throughout the city.



Breland

It isn't difficult to understand that Paul was certainly discouraged by his circumstances. Also, Paul was more than likely concerned about the reception he would get when he arrived in Rome. He had to be concerned about the Jews, the Jewish Christians, and the Gentile Christians, not to mention any fears that he might have about the Roman court.

Verse 15 indicates to us that Paul was discouraged. However, Paul "took courage" when he met the brothers in Christ who came out to greet him as he was being escorted into the city of Rome. We know from verse 16 that Luke was still with Paul at this point because of the usage of "we." We also learn that Paul was afforded a small amount of freedom in that he was allowed to stay in a private residence

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(under guard), rather than in a Roman jail or barracks. While this wasn't ideal, it would give Paul a greater opportunity to preach the gospel.

Paul's concern about his acceptance from the Christian community had been answered by their coming out to meet him and encouraging him. Next, Paul needed to know how the Jews of Rome feel about him. Therefore, Paul summoned the Jewish leaders to his house for a discussion. Even though Paul had declared himself an apostle to the Gentiles, he was still closely tied to Judaism and deeply concerned about the Jewish people. While Paul wanted their friendship and acceptance, he wanted them to trust Christ even more. Paul saw this as an opportunity to proclaim the gospel of hope to these Jews. Apparently, they hadn't heard anything bad about Paul, and they weren't completely opposed to the Christian message because they wanted to hear Paul's version of this gospel.

Their ignorance of the gospel message raises the question as to whether or not any of the apostles had ever been to Rome prior to Paul's arrival. There has been among some denominations a strong tradition that Simon Peter had founded the church in Rome. However, if Simon Peter had been in Rome

years prior to Paul's arrival, given his strong devotion to Judaism, it seems incredible that these Jewish leaders would be so uninformed concerning the Christian movement.

When Paul was given the opportunity to preach to them, he skillfully did so, using their own scriptures to convince them that Jesus was the Christ. Paul was able to hold their attention and even won some converts up until he reached a certain point, a point which had cleared the room of his Jewish audience on several other occasions. That point was that the Jews had willfully rejected the Messiah and that now the door was open for Gentiles to receive salvation.

Here again, the Jews were willing to listen to a message that Jesus was the Christ. What they couldn't bear was the message that they must be willing to include everyone in God's grace. It was after this "one word" that they walked

out. Paul found himself where he had been so many times before, unable to get his own people to cross the social and racial barriers that separated them from the Gentiles. Paul made it clear to the Jews that God and his message of salvation were going to hurdle those boundaries with or without them.

We began this study of Acts on the supposition that Luke's purpose for writing this book was "to show a victory of Christianity, to show the expansion of a concept, the liberation of the gospel as it breaks through barriers that are religious, racial, and national." We believe that Luke accomplished his purpose and concluded on a victorious note as he stated that Paul continued "preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered" (RSV).

Breland is pastor, North Greenwood Church, Greenwood.

Churches adopt expanded annuity plan

The following churches have adopted the Expanded Annuity Plan since those reported in the May 11 issue of the BAPTIST RECORD: Covington: Lone Star; Franklin: New Salem and Sarepta; George: Agricola; Hinds-Madison: FBC Byram; Jackson: East Moses Point; Lafayette/Marshall: New Hope; Perry: FBC Runnelstown; Portolac: Zion, Union County; Cornersville; and Walthall: Mesa.

Vietnam: Baptists help rebuild what war destroyed

By Erich Bridges

DANANG, Vietnam (BP) — In a place where they once destroyed the land and killed each other, Americans and Vietnamese are building together.

Southern Baptists have supplied materials to help the people of Quangnam Danang Province in Vietnam build a dam and improve health care through a new hospital and several local clinics.

The nearly completed dam rises out of rice fields that were free-fire zones during the Vietnam War.

A recent delegation visiting Vietnam represented Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist organization that assists nations where missionaries do not work. The group included Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks; CSI Director Lewis Myers and his wife, Toni; former Vietnam missionaries who once lived in Danang; and CSI's Indochina specialists, physician Marvin Raley and development worker Fred Kauffman.

Southern Baptists began emergency food and medical assistance to poverty-stricken Vietnam four years ago through the efforts of Raley, a pediatrician from Houston who helped start and run a children's hospital in neighboring Kampuchea, formerly called Cambodia. Now he coordinates CSI's small-scale but expanding health and development work in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos.

"When I first met Dr. Raley, he said he wanted to help end malnutrition here. The dam can help that," said Pham Si Tho, engineer and vice director of Quangnam Danang Province's hydrology service. The dam will help irrigate 27,500 acres of rice fields, he reported, and "the lives of hundreds

of thousands of local inhabitants will be remarkably improved."

Quangnam Danang is one of the rice bowls of Vietnam, but even there, malnourished children are a common sight.

Defoliants dropped on the area during the war, like Agent Orange, also are suspect in an infant mortality rate that averages 63.5 per thousand.

Killers include mysterious cancers and deformities in newborns. But the most common health problems are hunger, intestinal parasites, malaria, respiratory infections — preventable causes of much of the suffering in the Third World.

Yet even the resistant and deadly strains of falciparum malaria found in the province — introduced by malarial soldiers treated for common strains and rushed back to the battlefield — are a leftover curse of war.

"Almost everything we're fighting can be traced directly back to the war," Raley asserted. "They talk about people being killed by unexploded bombs. I'll guarantee a lot more people are being killed by falciparum malaria."

The new district hospital and local clinics aided by CSI are fighting to bring better health to the area, but their weapons are primitive. "These clinics don't have the equipment I would normally carry in my bag," said Raley. One clinic alone serves an area populated by 15,000 people.

CSI is providing basic medical equipment units recommended by UNICEF.

Southern Baptists are aiding a hospital and clinics and funding a planned irrigation project to improve food production in Bac Thai's Dinh Hoa District. Hoes, plows and dawn-

to-dark labor constitute farm technology in Dinh Hoa; a tractor is not in sight. The irrigation project could nearly double production for 2,000 people in the area. Asked if the project is a big undertaking for the area, the Vietnamese design engineer answers, "It's big if you haven't had it before."

Most Vietnamese simply want to forget a grim past as they fight to overcome a grim present, they have said. A common reaction to Americans visitors is, "Why are you here?" The CSI delegation responded by sharing its Christian motivation in providing assistance and relating the historical character of Southern Baptists.

"I think there is a special affinity between Vietnamese people and Baptist people, or should be," Raley said, "because we historically have been a poor, farming people who have had to work very hard. So we respect what the Vietnamese are trying to accomplish, and we want to work as partners."

Erich Bridges is on the staff of the Foreign Mission Board.

Custom may lead a man into many errors, but it justifies none. — Henry Fielding.



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Christ clouds the issue?

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How do you know that Christianity is the favored religion? Maybe God likes Moslems best; you don't know. Why should we be better than other religions?

I suppose you think that anyone who isn't a Christian will go to hell. How about an atheist who leads a good, virtuous life? If God sends him to hell because he doesn't believe in Christ, then God is not fair or merciful. God is then prejudiced. I do not believe in Christ, but I believe in God. If there is a heaven I expect to get there, whether or not I believe in Christ; who was a mortal. I think to believe in God is good enough. He is wise and all powerful, a helping spirit. Why cloud up the issue with side details like Christ?

You seem to protest too much. If you are not a Christian, then you are not a Christian, and we don't put you down for it. On the other hand, we are, and whatever claim to being "favored" we have is not arrogance. It is rather that if God desires to make a disclosure of himself, he would very probably do it by giving people glimpses into truth in primitive religions, but somewhere along the way he'd find the best method for letting us know what he's really like. We think that's what he did in Christ. It's something like we are not happy with witch doctors' cures in Africa (although they probably did some good) when we have penicillin. We just think it's a better way to cure people. We also think that Christianity can and should produce more happy fulfilled people.

I'm sending you a complete statement on God's plan of salvation, and will be praying for you as you read it. We'd like for you to know the full joy of the Christ-centered life.

Students urged to prepare bi-vocationally

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP) — College students torn between a call to ministry and a love for their major can choose both, according to a Baptist missions leader.

Jeff Lewis, associate director of Mission Service Corps for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has called on Christian students to plan ahead for bivocational ministry.

Mission Service Corps is a denominational program comprised of adult volunteers who raise their own support to serve more than one year as missionaries. One branch of Mission Service Corps is Tentmakers, a support system for bivocational missionaries.

"There are hundreds of students struggling because they love their majors but are pulled toward missions," Lewis said. "They think they have to choose between the two."

It is possible to find total fulfillment in both.

"We need to see every talent and gift God has given us as an avenue God could use to open the door to missions. Instead of narrowing our concept of ministry, we need to give God full opportunity to enhance those talents for ministry."

Future Southern Baptist ministers must break from the traditional pat-

tern of studying religion in college and then going to seminary to study religion again, Lewis said. Instead, people called to ministry should develop vocational skills in addition to studying theology.

"We think these vocational skills are the things that entangle us from doing God's call," he said. "But they really are the things that could allow us to answer God's call."

Tentmakers especially are effective in new-work areas where young churches cannot afford to pay staff members, he explained.

To meet this challenge, changes first must occur on the college campus, Lewis said. "Seminary is too late. In college, students are deciding upon majors and deciding whether to develop marketable skills."

Southern Baptists currently graduate 2,400 students annually from their six seminaries to serve in about 1,300 full-time paid positions open each year, he noted.

The problem is not that seminaries train too many ministers or that students misunderstand God's call, Lewis said. Rather, too many students expect to answer God's call by serving in a traditional staff position within 100 miles of their hometowns. Mark Wingfield writes for the HMB.

ATLANTA (BP) — Despite drought, farm crisis, and grain embargoes in the past decade, rural Southern Baptist churches have consistently increased missions giving, four researchers reported.

New research from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board indicates that rural Southern Baptist churches gave a larger percentage of their income to missions during recent tough economic times than metropolitan churches did in comparatively good times.

The study was done by Gary Farley and Ray Dalton of the Home Mission Board in Atlanta along with Gregory Hoover and Michael Carter of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn.

"Our hypothesis was that when things got tough, rural churches would cut back on missions giving," Farley said. "But that was proved wrong."

"This study indicates that when rural people get in a bind, they're more mindful of the needs of others. Instead of becoming selfish, they gave more than ever before."

The four researchers studied more than 10,000 Southern Baptist churches in Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Georgia. They focused on 1,400 churches in counties with agriculture-based economies.

Financial data was taken from the denomination's annual statistical survey for the years 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1987. Farley explained that 1975 was the "boom of rural agriculture," while the latter years were marked by drought, lower commodity prices, and farm foreclosures.

By Mark Wingfield

Missions expenditures included all giving to ministries outside the local church, such as to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

The average total membership of rural churches grew slowly from 1975 to 1985 and plateaued the following two years, the study said. In contrast, metropolitan churches grew steadily in membership from 1975 through 1987.

During that 12-year span, both agriculture-dependent churches and non-agriculture-dependent churches increased the proportion of their church budgets given to missions, Farley said.

However, churches dependent upon agriculture consistently gave a slightly higher share of their budgets to missions despite declining local economies, he added. Missions giving in rural churches increased from nearly 15 percent to nearly 17 percent.

During the same time, missions giving in metropolitan churches increased from 14 percent to slightly more than 16 percent.

"It appears that when you're suffering, you're more sensitive to the hurting of others," he said. "I feel a little guilty on Sunday when I walk into a nice suburban church that has just redecorated and bought a new organ while cutting back on missions giving."

"Also, the mission of the church is more likely to be central in the lives of rural and small-town people than it is for metropolitan folks," Farley said. "Baptists in metropolitan areas

face a greater temptation to be like secular people.

"We need to recognize that historically our missions endeavor has been supported by many small, plain churches made up of working people who really believe in the Great Commission and have given their sons and daughters and dollars and have uttered their prayers to make missions happen."

Mark Wingfield writes for the Home Mission Board.

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